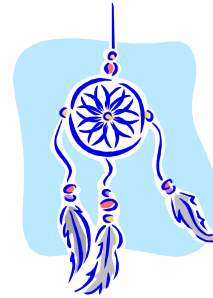


# Statewide Town Hall Meetings Report On Peer Support

## What Nebraskan's Want from Peer Support

September 18, 2009

The Office of Consumer Affairs of the Division of Behavioral Health in the Department of Health and Human Service of Nebraska hosted a town hall meeting to discuss peer support and the concept of a consumer network. Funding was provided by the National Association of Mental Health Program Directors and the State Mental Health Association of



Capturing the Hopes and  
Dreams of Nebraskans!

## Charles Willis, Heather Peck, and Stuart Perry Speak

Heather Peck shared the success of Vocal Virginia in supporting 780 members, writing educational materials, hosting annual conferences, meeting with the commissioner of mental health, and using mental health and addiction block grant dollars for peers in the state of Virginia to start their own businesses. Some of the peer-run businesses included computer training in Microsoft Office products, a whole health center that has services such as yoga and acupressure, and peer support programs. She also share her lived experience with Addiction and Mental Health issues.

Charles Willis shared the leadership of the Georgia Mental Health Consumer Network in Georgia in supporting a membership of over 3,500 members. He described the various services that peers provide in Georgia including Double Trouble in Recovery Groups, The Peer Support and Wellness

## Newsletter Spotlight

Nebraska.  
Carol Coussons de Reyes, administrator for the Office of Consumer Affairs, shared information on Nebraska's existing peer support workforce and introduced the guest speakers including: Heather Peck, Charles



Peer Support- People in recovery mentoring others in wellness and recovery thru mutual sharing of experiences and stories.

Center that has a respite for peers and groups (financial literacy, sports, cooking, Wellness Recovery Action Plan trainings, computer skills, creative writing, aromatherapy, housing, and job skills), peer mentors for folks leaving the hospital, and Medicaid billable peer supports. He talked about GMHCN's annual conference that has 500 peers in attendance. Charles candidly shared his lived experience with addiction, mental health issues, and homelessness.

Stuart Perry shared his story of how he came to lead and fund an independent peer support program in Americus, GA. This program could not survive on Medicaid funding alone because of the rates and Perry told stories about how he raised funds to support peers attending the program. He had bake sales, sold donuts, raffled off gasoline, had the mayor declare a "get your goat day" to allow use of a goat to fundraise, and had grown vegetables to sell to the community.

## Highway to Recovery by Dan Powers

Charles, Heather, and Stuart were all staying in Omaha and were supposed to meet me at the fireplace at the Hilton lobby. Heather Peck followed directions, but Stuart and Charles were engrossed in a breakfast conversation and did not make it to the fireplace. Fortunately, the dining room was not busy and I asked the two people sitting in the dining room if they were our speakers. They were, so we loaded up the van and headed for Lincoln. (Continued Page 5)

# What Nebraskan's Are Saying They Want from Peer Support and Networking:

## Lincoln

### Peer Support

Multiple Doors to Peer Support  
Continue Process of Building Peer Support  
Peer Support Certification  
Federal Block Grant Dollars for Peer Support  
Trainings Developed and Sponsored by Peers  
Peer Support that is not Clinically Supervised  
More Town Hall Meetings

### Consumer Network

Communicate outside of email  
Access to Computers  
People really want a network  
Funding for a Network  
More Cohesive Support for Peers  
Benefit- louder in numbers  
Advocacy around mental health blockgrant dollars

## Omaha:

### Peer Support

Opportunity to Assist Others  
Peer doing Peer Support b/c makes them happy  
Trauma Training  
Women Focus  
Including Technology in Trainings/Outreach  
Rural Reach  
Training in Advocacy  
Training in Nebraska Models of Peer Support  
Training in Peer vs. Provider Perspective  
Giving Back  
Spreading the Word  
Listening (where others are at)  
Seeing other perspectives (worldview)  
Role Modeling  
Living Room Model Training (Arizona)  
Warmline Training  
Expand on AA models (get what you give)

### Consumer Network

Education to Reduce Stigma  
Doing what GA/VA Consumer Networks Do  
Regional Meetings  
Study European Models of Peer Support  
Create an Oral History/Record Stories  
Training on Developing Your Story  
More Conferences  
Conferences Open to Public  
Invite the Whole State to Conferences  
Networking for Trained Peers  
Sharing Ideas Statewide  
Networking for Peers  
Fundraisers with Celebrities

## Native American: Omaha

### Peer Support

Funding  
Education on MH/Substance Abuse  
Education for all People about MH  
Community Forums (all inclusive)  
Formation of Partnership  
More Town Hall Meetings  
Incorporate Families in Learning  
Celebrate  
Networking  
Spiritual Leaders

### Consumer Network

Annual Meetings  
Mental Health Day at the Capitol  
Fundraising



## **Norfolk**

### **Peer Support**

Mentoring Youth  
Grief Groups/ Grief Processing  
  
Inclusion of other Disability Groups  
Variety of Settings for Peer Services  
Peer Services Outside the Clinic Setting  
Accepting Peers where they are at vs. changing them  
Listening versus Advice  
Supporting Each Other

### **Consumer Network**

Infrastructure to Tie the Peers in Nebraska  
Work for Everyone  
Group Gatherings- Local and Other Places  
Talk about Peer Support  
Education  
Advocacy/Funding for Transportation  
Phone Access to Peers  
Easier Email Access  
Email is not the same as live  
New and Old Members Included at Conferences  
Providers/Policy folk at Conferences  
Interservice Cooperative Trainings  
Venue to Connect with Providers that isn't about power  
Healing for Providers

## **Hastings**

### **Peer Support**

Outreach to those with reading challenges  
Video Educational Materials  
Pictorial Educational Materials  
Peer Run Programs  
Whole Health- Mind, Body, Spirit  
Website that connects Peer Support Groups  
Website that lists area Peer Support Activities  
Environments that support confidentiality  
Forensic Peer Support  
Male Oriented Supports and Education  
Role Models  
Relaxation  
Coping Skills  
Education for Law Enforcement  
Education for Doctors  
Where agencies are outside of MH system  
Education on Laws (HIPPA, Confidentiality in Housing)  
Jobs for peers in all agencies  
Respect  
Job role defined  
Self-Advocacy  
Alternative-funding outside Medicaid  
Youth Focus Track  
Education for Families  
Strategic Planning Education for Peer Leadership  
Provider Education

### **Consumer Network**

Lots of Members  
Advocacy around Transportation  
Website about Statewide Activities  
Newsletter  
Funding for Speakers  
Information on where Resources are



## **Scottsbluff:**

### **Peer Support**

MH/SA mix of experience  
Focus on Physical and Mental  
  
Trauma  
Stress  
Empathy vs. Sympathy  
Meet me where I am  
Advocacy around services  
Communication Skills  
Forum for Speaking  
Support for Advocacy  
Use easy layman language  
Conflict Resolution  
Consumer Run Programs  
Benefits Navigation  
Community Resources  
Refocusing  
Extended Peer Support  
self-advocacy  
unlimited ongoing support  
talk about life outside MH  
know natural supports (NAMI)  
5 years experience with a diagnosis  
laughter

### **Consumer Network**

Consumer Run Programs  
Services other than Cirrus  
Services for those turned away by Cirrus  
  
Training Funds for Region  
Efficient Budgeting  
Revolving Funds for COOP  
Funds that match local banking website  
Newsletter  
Phone Conferences are Challenging  
Enjoy Telehealth System  
Telehealth is free  
UN has a telesystem  
Motivate folks to participate  
Relationship development w/Providers  
Advocacy around services  
Local Networking  
Training in ICCD(Clubhouse)

## **North Platte**

### **Peer Support**

Code of Ethics  
Checks/Balances  
Consistent Training  
WRAP  
Drop in Center Knowledge  
Trained Volunteers  
Training in Job Skills  
Community Resource Info  
Housing Info  
Daily availability  
Education to providers  
advocacy  
self-advocacy  
respect  
advocacy within providers  
advocacy iwthin region  
healing  
person-centered planning  
stigma reduction  
understand crisis respite  
celebration of successes  
respect for peer support  
access for folks with reading challenges

### **Consumer Network**

peer run crisis respite  
Drop in Center  
list-serve email  
mailing list info  
support for kids  
parent/family support  
meetings outside Omaha  
access (local weather challenges)  
telehealth system  
training available for peers



## **Nebraskan's Peer Support is Growing**

**by**

### **Carol Coussons de Reyes**

It was enlightening to see and hear from Nebraskans first hand about what they want from peer support. It was a tough schedule and I no idea that it would be this successful. It was amazing that folks could connect with the videotaped presenters and that one person was inspired to go out start his own business.

This is the results of your input that you can expect from the OCA, after these meetings:

- Statewide Peer Support Training Opportunities (Look for October 1st Application)
- Creation of a Code of Ethics for Peer Support
- More Networking Opportunities
- Ways to Make Technology Accessible to all Peers for Training and Networking
- Inclusion of More Partner Organizations in Planning Our Conferences
- An Certificate of Peer Association with the OCA for those qualified



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**Written by Dan Powers, Consumer Liaison with Office of Consumer Affairs**

There was a good attendance at the Bennet Martin Library in Lincoln, the Omaha Public Library, and at the Native American meeting at the Ponca Tribe's Fred Leroy Health and Wellness Clinic in South Omaha. This was the last location where we had live presenters. For the remaining four presentations, a video of the presentations was used.

On Thursday we headed to Norfolk to the Lifelong Learning Center and on Friday to the Hastings Public Library. We realized at the Hastings Library we didn't have speakers. Without sweating Carol quickly asked me to ask the librarians to assist, and recovery prevailed as speakers for the computer system were found.

We had covered five locations in five days and spent the Labor day week in the office.

On Monday we headed to Scottsbluff, because Carol's baby is too young to understand she is gone and is nursing we had her family in tow. We passed under the Arch in Kearney and stopped at Ole's in Paxton to see this legendary Nebraska attraction that includes a mounted polar bear, giraffe, and numerous other deceased animals. Carol's husband said his father was a hunter and would have been very impressed by Ole's.

We continued on West on the interstate then headed North at the Sidney exit. We were following a truck and I decided to pass. I thought we were going to crash, when I got about halfway around the truck I observed that there was a car making a left hand turn in front of the truck. I slowed and then the car in front of the truck pulled into the passing lane. I had to let a line of cars that was following the truck pass me before I could get back in the northbound lane. The recovery tour, Carol's family, and the state vehicle prevailed as we got back into the proper lane.

Carol and her husband were appreciative of the beauty of chimney rock. The presentation went well in Scottsbluff and we headed for North Platte. Things went smoothly, however when we reached North Platte, Carol discovered that she had left her diaper bag in the McDonalds in Sidney. I offered to go back and get the diaper bag, but Carol said she had more. Thanks to the manager it is on its way back to Lincoln, and once again recovery prevailed.

The North Platte presentation was well attended and we headed back to Lincoln. It was an unprecedented travel schedule for our section and very productive in gathering insight into what peers want from peer support in Nebraska.